

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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### COMMISSIONER MEACHAM ANNOUNCES PUBLIC HEARING ON WILDERNESS PROPOSAL SCHEDULED IN ANCHORAGE AND COLD BAY, ALASKA

A proposal to set aside some 300,000 acres of national wildlife lands as wilderness in Alaska will be discussed at a public hearing May 16 and 19, Commissioner Charles H. Meacham of the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The proposed wilderness area is within the Izembek National Wildlife Range on the extreme tip of the Alaska Peninsula. The hearing will open in Anchorage and resume three days later at Cold Bay, the little town serving as the Wildlife Range headquarters, about 650 air miles southwest of Anchorage.

Commissioner Meacham said results of a study of Izembek made by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife will be presented at the hearing so that interested persons may judge the proposed action.

Views expressed at the hearing will be considered by the Secretary of the Interior in making his recommendation to the President regarding suitability or nonsuitability of including these lands in the National Wilderness Preservation System. On completion of the review process, the President will make recommendations to the Congress for appropriate action.

The hearing begins at 9 a.m. May 16 in Room 509, Cordova Building, 555 Cordova Street, Anchorage, and at 9 a.m. May 19 in the old theater building, Cold Bay. Notice of the hearing has been published in the Federal Register.

The National Wilderness Preservation System, established by the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, is composed of federally owned lands designated by Congress as "wilderness areas," and administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in a natural condition.

The 415,000 acre Izembek Range was established in 1960 as a refuge, breeding ground and management area for wildlife. About 95,000 acres of the Range are tidelands under State jurisdiction and thus not eligible for Federal wilderness classification. About 20,000 acres of the federally-administered area do not qualify for wilderness consideration because of existing roads, military and other Government installations, old military remains, and development plans.

Commissioner Meacham said that the proposed wilderness area, lying between the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean, is a feeding and resting place for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds during spring and fall migrations. Resident wildlife includes rock and willow ptarmigan, Alaska brown bear, barren ground caribou, and valuable furbearers such as otter and wolverine. Offshore areas provide habitat for large populations of seals, walrus and whales.

Included in the Izembek wilderness proposal is a tract of almost 1,500 acres which is part of the Range land mass but is technically within the neighboring Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, apparently because it was separated from the mainland by a narrow channel at the time the refuge was established in 1913. Wilderness proposals for the Aleutian Islands Refuge will be scheduled for public hearing later.

A map and other information about the wilderness proposal is available from the Refuge Manager, Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Cold Bay, Alaska 99571, or the Associate Supervisor, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 6917 Seward Highway, Anchorage, Alaska 99502, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, P. O. Box 3737, Portland, Oregon 97208.

Oral or written statements may be submitted at the hearing or written comments can be sent to the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in Portland, Oregon, by July 1, 1970, when the hearing record will be closed.

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